GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1050
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2016
National Apple Festival
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether two days National Apple Festival was held in Dehradun recently and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether a number of experts said that many of the apple trees in the country have grown too old to produce good quality fruit which is adversely impacting apple production and over 60 per cent of apple orchards in India are producing inferior quality fruit and need to be replaced;

(c) if so, the facts thereof and losses suffered due to decrease in production during each of the last three years and the current year;

(d) whether the Union Government has started a scheme which intended to motivate farmers to replace their old trees with new ones by giving them an incentive;

(e) if so, the details of the scheme and the result thereof; and

(f) the further steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve quality and quantity of apples produced in the country and initiate a massive drive of uprooting all apple trees which were over 50 years old?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

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(a): Yes, Madam. The two days National Apple Festival, organized by Department of Horticulture & Food Processing Uttarakhand was held during 17-18 September 2016 at Veer Shiromani Madho Singh Bhandari Kisan Bhawan, Ring Road, Dehradun.

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(b) & (c): Department of Horticulture & Food Processing Uttarakhand has informed that few participants in the Apple Festival mentioned about decline in production and quality but gave no authentic statistics in support of their assertion.

It is a fact that apple orchards which are more than 50 years old are mostly on seedling rootstock and not in high density plantation system and hence are less productive, having inferior fruit quality, and are disease and pest susceptible. However, only limited varieties are being grown in such orchards. Area expansion/ new orchards which are using high density grafted plants mostly on clonal rootstock varieties which have better productivity.

All India area and production statistics for the last three years reveals that there is no decline in apple production. The production has in-fact increased from 19.15 Lakh MT in 2012-13 to 28.72 Lakh MT in 2015-16 (3rd estimates) and the productivity has also increased from 6.15 Mt/ha in 2012-13 to 9.16 Mt/ha in 2015-16 (3rd estimates). This is primarily because of progressive replacement of old and senile orchards with high density plantation system with high yielding and superior varieties and area expansion under new orchards.

(d) & (e): Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare has been implementing Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a centrally sponsored scheme to promote holistic growth of horticulture.

Under MIDH, Horticulture Mission for North East & Himalayan States (HMNEH) has a component for Rejuvenation / Replacement of senile plantation and canopy management for apple orchards. Under HMNEH financial assistance to individual farmers, farmer's cooperatives, Self-Help groups, growers associations and commodity organizations are provided for rejuvenating/replanting senile plantations @20000 per hectare (ha) limited to 2 ha per beneficiary.

(f): In order to improve quality and quantity of apples produced in the country the following steps have been taken:

â€¢ To promote the quality production of apple in Uttarakhand, the State Government has taken an initiative by launching a new scheme- 'Apple Mission' in the year 2015-16. The scheme is implemented to promote use of grafted apple plants on clonal root stock under ultra High Density Plantation (HDP) including installation of Drip, Anti Hail net etc.for higher production in lesser area.

â€¢ State also implemented a new scheme with increased State share for Rejuvenation of old and senile orchards including apple i.e. Rs. 30000/ha per beneficiary (Rs. 20000 GoI share under HMNEH+Rs. 30000 State share amounting to total Rs. 50000/ha).
â€¢ To promote latest technology and production of planting material with suitable root stock a Center of Excellence for temperate fruits including apple is being setup under HMNEH at Kanatal (Tehri) under Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry with total grant of Rs. 4.98 Crore.
â€¢ In Himachal Pradesh, the State is implementing a World Bank assisted "Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project" with a total outlay of Rs. 1170 Crore which includes interventions for productivity enhancement of fruit crops through import of elite plant material and it is envisaged under this project that the majority of old apple orchards shall be
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rejuvenated/ replaced with latest improved imported elite plant material to increase quality, production of apple fruit through scientific management of existing orchards.
â€¢ In J&K, in order to enhance production and productivity of apples the state is promoting High Density plantation by using suitable rootstocks and spur type cultivars for reducing the gestation period and increasing productivity. They are also phasing out old plantation by replanting new apple varieties on suitable rootstocks.
In addition, Indian council of agriculture research − central institute of temperate horticulture Srinagar (ICAR-CITH Srinagar) has undertaken following research projects and research to improve quality of apples:

â€¢ Canopy management and plant architectural engineering in apple, pear and peach.
â€¢ Energy harvest through plant architectural engineering for increasing source and sink relationship in apple.
â€¢ Standardization of medium, medium high and high density orcharding in temperate fruits and nuts.
Further, a Variety, CITH-Lodh apple -1 (red) has been developed by ICAR-CITH in 2009 which gives 30 tonnes/ha yield under traditional system of planting. Further experiments on High Density Plantation of this variety are going on and are expected to give higher yield.

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